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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, December 6

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
December 7, 2009

Morning Stayed at his official residential quarters.

13:00 Met Foreign Minister Okada.

18:42 Met Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsuno; Lower House members Akihiro Ohata, Banri Kaieda, and Hiroshi Kawauchi; and Upper House member Susumu Yanase.

4) U.S. use of Futenma airfield may be prolonged: Delay will likely affect transfer of Marines to Guam

YOMIURI (Top play) (Full)
December 5, 2005

The governments of Japan and Tokyo on Dec. 4 held their second ministerial-level working group meeting to discuss the relocation of

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the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa Prefecture). The Japanese side sought understanding from the U.S. regarding its policy of postponing reaching a decision until next year because the Social Democratic Party (SDP) is opposing the existing plan to relocate the facilities to the coastal area of the U.S. military's Camp Schwab (in Henoko, Nago City, Okinawa Prefecture). The U.S. side called for an early settlement, noting that the existing plan is the only feasible plan.

In this connection, the U.S. participants of the working group informally contacted a source connected with the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) and conveyed the U.S. intention to take budgetary measures to deal with the aging Futenma air base facilities in the event that the Hatoyama administration searches for a relocation site other than the one specified in the existing plan. If a resolution to the issue is delayed further, the presence of Futenma Air Station in Ginowan could become permanent. The U.S. message is being taken as a move reflecting its impatience.

The meeting brought together Foreign Minister Okada, Defense Minister Kitazawa, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Roos, U.S. Forces Japan Commander Rice, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Schieffer, and State Department Japan Desk Chief Maher.

The foreign minister explained the domestic political situation, including the SDP's stance, and said to the U.S. side, "We want to settle the issue in cooperation with the U.S. It is necessary to reduce the burden of Okinawa as much as possible." Okada apparently asked the U.S. side to comply with Japan's request for the transfer of the training site, about which Japan is sounding out the U.S. on the working level, ahead of schedule. The defense minister also told the U.S. side, "It will not be easy to reach a definite decision before the end of the year." Concerning looking into about a new relocation site, he sought understanding, saying, "The prime minister has been saying from way back that every option should be considered."

The U.S. expressed concern, with one participant saying, "If the situation drags on like this, it will become even more difficult to reach a decision." Stressing that the USFJ realignment plan includes the transfer of Marines to Guam, he warned, "The U.S. Congress is very interested in this issue. In terms of relations with Congress, unless the relocation of the Futenma functions makes headway, it could have an adverse effect on the entire plan, including the transfer of Marines to Guam."

After the meeting, the foreign minister and the defense minister reported on the details of the meeting to the prime minister. The prime minister on the evening of the same day told the press corps, "Naturally I hope that the U.S. will value the Japan-U.S. alliance." However, he also explained, "The U.S. side has expressed strong concern about matters related to the schedule."

Prior to the working group meeting, Roos delivered a speech on the USFJ realignment plan in Tokyo on the same day. He stated, "Presumably there will be various adjustments." His statement is

being taken as an indication that the U.S. is ready to accept measures to reduce the burden of Okinawa sought by Japan if the issue is settled in line with the existing plan.

5) Foreign Minister Okada: Negotiations with U.S. over Futenma relocation reaching limit

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ASAHI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
December 6, 2009

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada met on Dec. 5 with Masao Kishimoto, president of Okinawa Times, in Naha City. During the meeting, in connection with Japan-U.S. talks on the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa Prefecture), Okada told Kishimoto: "We've been holding in-depth talks for two months. We've reached our limit." Although the cabinet of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has decided against coming to a conclusion on the issue before the end of the year, the U.S. government has strongly urged Japan to implement the existing Japan-U.S. agreement to relocate the Futenma air base to the Henoko district in Nago City. Therefore, Okada's comment demonstrated his harsh view of the situation that if the Hatoyama administration insists on an alternative site other than Henoko, Futenma relocation itself will become difficult.

According to a participant in the meeting, Okada said that the idea he had proposed on merging Futenma with Kadena Air Base would be "difficult." He then said, "(The existing plan) has already been agreed upon between Japan and the United States. We cannot go back to square one in our discussions." He added, "We have run out of options." He indicated in his remarks that Japan has no other option than to accept the plan to relocate Futenma to Henoko.

Okada stated at a press conference after the meeting, "I wonder if the relationship of trust (between Tokyo and Washington) can be maintained if the agreement is not implemented. I am very concerned about the current state of the Japan-U.S. relationship." He also stressed that postponing a settlement of the issue would not lead to a resolution. He said, "As foreign minister I will have to find a breakthrough. We, including the Prime Minister, are discussing what decision will be lead to a breakthrough in the situation." He intends to look for a breakthrough strategy right until the last minute.

6) FM Okada urges PM Hatoyama to make decision on Futenma relocation based on current plan at early date

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Full)
December 7, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama met with Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada at his official residential quarters for about 80 minutes on Dec. 6 to discuss the issue of the relocation of the U.S. forces Futenma Air Station in Okinawa. Okada explained to Hatoyama that the U.S. side had reacted strongly to his decision to defer a solution on this issue to next year. He urged Hatoyama to make a decision based on the current plan to relocate the base to the coastal area of Camp Schwab (in Nago City) under the 2006 Japan-U.S. agreement at an early date in order to prevent a rift in the bilateral alliance relationship.

Okada requested the meeting on the pretext of giving Hatoyama a briefing on his visit to Okinawa on Dec. 4-5. He reiterated to Hatoyama that there is no possibility of the U.S. side accepting any proposal other than the existing relocation plan. He also informed the Prime Minister that he had given up on his own proposal to merge Futenma with Kadena Air Base in Okinawa. He asserted that the Prime Minister's postponement of a decision will result in the U.S.'s lost

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of trust in Japan and that the roadmap for U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) realignment containing measures to reduce the burden imposed by the

Futenma base might be scrapped.

Hatoyama apparently did not give Okada a definite answer. Hatoyama had decided earlier to defer a solution to the Futenma issue to next year due to difficulties in coordinating with coalition partner Social Democratic Party, which is opposed to the current relocation plan, and other reasons. He also instructed Okada and Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa to consider other relocation sites apart from the one specified in the existing plan.

Meanwhile, the U.S. side reacted strongly to the decision to defer a solution to the Futenma issue to next year at the Japan-U.S. cabinet level working group meeting on Dec. 4, stating that it is unacceptable and runs counter to the agreement reached at the Japan-U.S. summit in November. The U.S. side also hinted at rescinding the USFJ realignment roadmap.

7) Hashimoto statement on accepting request for moving Futenma to Kansai Airport creating sensation

MAINICHI (Page 29) (Excerpts)
December 7, 2009

Osaka Gov. Toru Hashimoto's indication that he will not rule out the argument of accepting a request for relocating the functions of Futenma Air Station from Okinawa to Kansai Airport has caused a stir. The government/ruling coalition, which has given up on finding a solution to the Futenma issue before the end of the year, is showing an interest, as seen in Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada's comment expressing his desire to hear Hashimoto's views. But chances to realize such a plan seem slim at the present. "People in Okinawa might have expectations that Kansa Airport will accept Futenma," an Okinawa-connected person in Osaka said with a troubled look on his face.

The statement was made on Nov. 30. Responding to a question from the press corps on the Futenma issue, Hashimoto said: "If there is a formal request (from the government), I want to consider it in the direction of accepting it in principle. People's New Party lawmaker Mikio Shimoji (representing the House of Representatives Okinawa No.1 district), who is calling for moving base functions outside Okinawa, called on Hashimoto to express his gratitude to him on Dec. 12. Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport (MLIT) Seiji Maehara, too, has welcomed Hashimoto's statement.

But in reality, the prevailing view is that moving a U.S. base to Kansai Airport is unfeasible. "It is not built for (military) training. Training cannot be conducted at Kansai," a senior MLIT official said. Asked by the MLIT about the true intention behind the statement, a senior government official replied, "It is not being given concrete consideration."

Hashimoto has emphatically said: "Okinawa was forced to shoulder a heavy burden during the fierce Okinawa ground battle (at the end of World War II), so we residents of mainland Japan must take that into consideration." He also said in a press meeting on Dec. 2: "I will present the idea at a meeting of the National Governors' Association as well."

8) Okinawa Minister Maehara points out possible problems in

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environmental assessment in Henoko plan may delay relocation

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
December 5, 2009

At a news conference on Dec. 4, Seiji Maehara, state minister for Okinawa affairs, referred to the possible deployment of the new transport helicopter MV-22 Osprey at the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) and pointed out that, "If this helicopter is deployed, the environmental impact assessment will have to be done all over again. There are some doubts as to whether the Henoko relocation plan is the fastest way," indicating his view that the relocation of the Futenma base to Henoko by 2014 will be difficult.

Maehara also said: "What the Prime Minister is really thinking about is how to reduce the burden on Okinawa (through the relocation), and that is probably why he is looking at the possibility of relocation out of the prefecture. It is important for the cabinet to find out if there are any good alternative plans."

9) LDP Secretary General Oshima says resolving Futenma issue before end of 2009 is in national interest

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
December 7, 2009

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Tadamori Oshima commented on the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa on Dec. 6. He said: "Since this issue may be fatal for the Japan-U.S. relationship, it is in the national interest, which is of higher priority than political party affiliation, to come up with a policy direction before the end of the year. We would like to inform the people of this serious crisis and press (Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama) to make a decision by the end of this year." He made this comment in reply to a question from reporters in Morioka City.

10) Japan, Australia postpone 2 plus 2 meeting to next spring

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
December 7, 2009

The governments of Japan and Australia have decided to put off the planned meeting later this year of the bilateral security consultative committee (2 plus 2) comprising foreign and defense ministers to next spring. This is because attendees from the Japanese side are unable to set schedules for the meeting in the aftermath of the prolongation of the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. The two governments will reschedule a meeting with an eye toward next spring, when the budget for next fiscal year is expected to be approved by the Diet.

11) Secret pact panel to question former treaties bureau chief and others

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
December 7, 2009

Masahiro Tsuruoka, Nanae Kurashige

A panel of experts tasked with verifying the Foreign Ministry's investigation into alleged secret pacts between Japan and the United

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States, including one on the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan, decided at its second meeting on Dec. 6 to conduct fact-finding interviews with former Treaties Bureau Director-General Kazuhiko Togo and other ex-Foreign Ministry officials. Other former officials mentioned include Nobuo Matsunaga, Ryohei Murata, and Takakazu Kuriyama, all former administrative vice ministers, as well as former American bureau chief Yoshio Okawara.

Togo has indicated that in 1999 when he was serving as Treaties Bureau chief, he stored documents connected with the secret nuclear pact in a red file. Murata, too, has said that the secret pact was passed down to successive vice ministers.

The three were holding such posts as Treaties Bureau chief and ambassador to the United States during the 1970s when retired Navy Rear Adm. Gene LaRoque testified before the U.S. Congress on port calls in Japan by U.S. warships carrying nuclear weapons and during the 1980s when former Ambassador to Japan Edwin Reischauer testified about the existence of the secret deal.

12) Cabinet approval rate falls to 59 percent, according to Yomiuri poll: Sharp increase in respondents who replied, "The prime minister has no leadership"

YOMIURI (Top play) (Excerpts)
December 7, 2009

In a (telephone-based) nationwide public opinion survey The Yomiuri Shimbun conducted between Dec.4-6, the approval rate for the Hatoyama cabinet was 59 percent, down 4 points from the 63 percent recorded in the previous poll carried out in November. The non-approval rate stood at 29 percent (27 percent in the previous poll). This is the first time the Hatoyama cabinet's approval rate has fallen below 60 percent. As a reason for not supporting the cabinet, "the prime minister has no leadership" sharply increased to 27 percent (13 percent in the previous survey). Prime Minister Hatoyama has decided to postpone a decision on the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to next year, which is viewed as having driven down his approval rating.

Concerning the Japan-U.S. agreement to relocate the Futenma functions to Nago City, Okinawa Prefecture, 32 percent (32 percent in the previous poll) said, "It is better to modify the agreement slightly, followed by 26 percent (31 percent in the previous poll), who replied, "It is better to press ahead with what has been agreed upon, " and 26 PERCENT (19 PERCENT in the previous poll), who answered, "It is better to substantively review the agreement." Nearly 60 percent of the pollees thought that the relocation should be carried out, based on the existing plan to relocate the facilities within the prefecture, if the number of those who replied "modify slightly" and or said "as agreed on" are totaled.

The proportion of pollees who do not think that the prime minister has fulfilled his accountability for his own politics or money problems, including the false statement on political funds donations, reached 85 percent (73 percent in the previous survey). The people are increasingly watching the prime minister with a stern eye.

13) PNP's Kamei insists on bigger economic stimulation package, demands renewed working team discussion on supplementary budget

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NIKKEI (Page 2) (Lead paragraph)
December 7, 2009

The government and the ruling parties will continue final coordination on the additional economic stimulation measures to be included in the second FY09 supplementary budget on Dec. 7. The People's New Party (PNP) is strongly demanding additional fiscal spending to make the package total over 8 trillion yen. Party leader Shizuka Kamei told reporters in Tokyo on Dec. 6: "You will see how many trillion yen the final package will be from the outcome of the discussions at the working team on Dec. 7," indicating his intention to refer the issue back to the working team.

14) Koizumi: The Hatoyama Administration will not last until the Upper House election"

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
December 5, 2009

At a dinner in Tokyo with former Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Taku Yamasaki and Deputy Secretary General Toshihiro Nikai former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi predicted that "the Hatoyama administration will not last until the Upper House election next summer." He also commented on the LDP, remarking, "Now's a time to be patient and prudent."

According to those present, he criticized the Hatoyama administration, which is flip-flopping on the issue of Futenma facility relocation: "The present fickle policy will lead to a complete loss of trust in Japan-U.S. relations." He also weighed in on the budget for next fiscal year: "At the point when government and local debt exceeds a quadrillion yen, the DPJ government is finished."

On the same day as the law freezing the sale of Japan Post Holdings Company stocks was enacted, Koizumi said: "If Japan Post stocks are not made available to the private sector, public finances can't be reconstructed. After the LDP retakes power, these will be a precious

revenue source," showing his attachment (to the postal privatization issue). But he added: "Public opinion holds the LDP responsible for everything, including the red color of post boxes and the tall height of utility poles. We must bide our time for two or three years."

ROOS